

## ■ 19 Getting to grips with grammar



*You may not know what a verb is, or for that matter what a noun, or a preposition, or an adverbial clause, is. Furthermore, you may feel that it is not necessary to know. Perhaps you feel that these things are the stuff of English lessons, English teachers and dusty grammar books. Or perhaps you feel that these words are just another kind of jargon: useful for the specialists in the field of English but unnecessary double-dutch to everyone else. And you may be right!*

### 19.1 Why does grammar matter?

Many people speak and write English quite correctly without knowing very much about the rules and conventions of the English language. They automatically apply them without thinking or realising that they are doing so. Most of us, because we have been brought up to speak English as our mother tongue, are able for the most part to put down words in the right order; that is, in a way that other people expect, and understand fairly easily. Most of us, for example, would recognise that to write: 'I haven't never been their' is wrong. It is wrong because 'their' is used when we are indicating possession of something – 'their coats', 'their children' – but it is not spelled like that when we are referring to a place. It is also wrong because two negatives cancel one another out – 'I haven't never' = 'I have not never' = 'I have', which is presumably the exact opposite of what the speaker meant to say.

The problem is that all of us, to a greater or lesser extent, make mistakes through either ignorance or carelessness and these mistakes can lead to misunderstandings, confusion and sometimes failure to communicate in the way we intended.

As we saw in the earlier chapters, we communicate by means of previously agreed symbols, but if we don't use the correct symbols, or if we don't use them in the way other people expect, they will have difficulty understanding what we mean. If we break the rules of the code they will at worst not be able to understand, and at best

# Prentice Halls Get A Grip On Grammar

**Diana Blackwood**



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In a global defined by information and interconnectivity, the enchanting power of words has acquired unparalleled significance. Their ability to kindle emotions, provoke contemplation, and ignite transformative change is really awe-inspiring. Enter the realm of "**Prentice Halls Get A Grip On Grammar**," a mesmerizing literary masterpiece penned by way of a distinguished author, guiding readers on a profound journey to unravel the secrets and potential hidden within every word. In this critique, we shall delve into the book's central themes, examine its distinctive writing style, and assess its profound impact on the souls of its readers.

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